



Ola Lokahi

Creating a Healthy Hawaii Together

NOVEMBER 2017

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The mission of the Department of Health is to protect and improve the health and environment for all people in Hawaii. We believe that an optimal state of physical, mental, social and environmental well-being is a right and responsibility of all of Hawaii's people.

DOH Launches Oral Health Screening Initiative

Children in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs to Benefit

A *aaahhhh!!!* That sound was heard early and often on Oct. 17 at The Towers at Kuhio Park in Kalihi, where the Department of Health (DOH) kicked off its

statewide oral health screening project with a dental screening for children age 5 and under. Approximately 80 children from low-income families were screened by a team of volunteer dentists and dental hygienists from the public and private sectors. By the end of the 2017-2018 school year, more than 2,970 children at more than 100 Head Start and Early Head Start sites statewide will receive a dental screening. The screenings are supported by grants from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the HDS Foundation.

The team evaluated the children's oral health, provided educational materials and offered recommendations for follow up dental care. It was the first public screening event for DOH dental hygienist **Linda Austin** who examined about 26 children.

"For the most part, the children had cavities, although there were a few with excellent teeth and others who needed urgent care," she said. "Everyone on the team was there for one purpose, which was to help these underserved children."

According to DOH dental director **Gavin Uchida**,

The Towers at Kuhio Park screening was a successful, collaborative effort.

"It was a clear example of how strong our sense of community is here in Hawaii. Thanks to our

partners from healthcare, education, and government, we were able to come together to work on a common goal," he said.

The *Hawaii Smiles* report, released by DOH last year, surveyed third-grade students and confirmed Hawaii's children's oral health ranked at the bottom in the nation. To improve this, the report recommended oral health education and prevention programs reach younger children. The DOH, in

collaboration with other partners, took action.

The current oral health screening initiative is a joint effort between DOH, the Hawaii Children's Action Network, Head Start Collaboration Office, and Hawaii Head Start and Early Head Start programs. It builds on the foundation set by the department's Hawaii Smiles statewide third-grade screening project two years ago.

DOH will submit data on the oral health of these young children to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The data will also be used to develop policies and programs to improve the oral health of children across Hawaii.

"Twenty-five years from now, we hope to see these very same children grow into adults with healthy and good-looking smiles," Gavin said.



DOH dental hygienist Linda Austin examines a child at the Towers at Kuhio Park Terrace.

'Super Germs' Among Us *DOH Screens Film on Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria*

Bacteria that have become resistant to antibiotics or other treatment options may sound like something from a horror film but according to health experts, such bacteria are becoming increasingly common. To raise awareness of these 'super germs,' the DOH Disease Outbreak Control Division held a screening of "Resistance," a 70-minute long documentary produced by filmmaker Michael Graziano about infections that kill hundreds of thousands of people worldwide each year.

According to DOH Antimicrobial Resistance Coordinator **Caitlin Cook**, every time antibiotics are used, bacteria are given another chance to develop resistance. Due to evolution and the ability of all bacteria to adapt, it's only a



Caitlin Cook

matter of time before any antibiotic becomes ineffective against the infections it was developed to treat.

"This is why we emphasize judicious use of antibiotics and to use them only

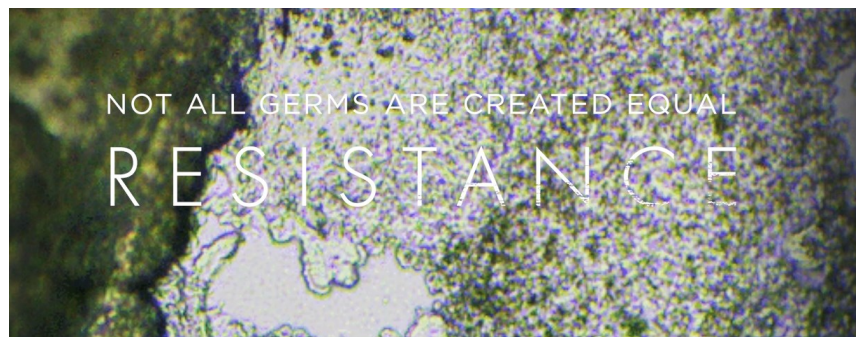
when needed," Caitlin said. After the screening, she took time to answer a few questions. Her responses have been edited for space and clarity.

Q: Why was film shown to DOH employees?

A: In observance of Antibiotic Awareness week (Nov. 13-17), we wanted to get the word out about this public health issue by raising awareness within our own community and sharing the work being done to keep the people of Hawaii safe.

Q: What or who is to blame for the increase in these "super germs?"

A: While antibiotics are important life-saving drugs, they are extremely



powerful and can sometimes come with unintended effects. In 1945, Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin, warned that the misuse of the drug could result in selection for resistant bacteria.

The misuse of antibiotics is the single most important factor leading to antibiotic resistance around the world. According to the U.S. Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), up to half of the antibiotics prescribed for people are not needed or are not optimally effective as prescribed. Antibiotics are also commonly used for promoting growth in food animals which is an unnecessary use of antibiotics.

Q: Are these germs here in Hawaii?

A: Yes. Some are relatively rare but others are becoming more and more common.

Q: What is DOH doing to stop the spread of these germs locally?

A: DOH is working to prevent further resistant germs from emerging as well as to track and control the current threat. To prevent further resistance, DOH facilitates the Hawaii Antimicrobial Stewardship Collaborative (HASC), which works to promote responsible antibiotic use in acute care settings, with 20 facilities participating. We also recently launched a similar collaborative geared towards improving antibiotic use at long term care facilities.

To address the current situation, the Disease Investigation Branch (DIB) is working closely with the State

Laboratories Division (SLD) and other partners across the state to perform surveillance for drug-resistant organisms. Our colleagues at SLD can now identify drug-resistant organisms with a very rapid turn-around time, enabling DIB to act quickly

to conduct investigations to ensure that proper infection control practices are in place to prevent the organism from spreading. The DOH also compiles the statewide antibiogram summary report which tracks antibiotic resistance in Hawaii over the years.

Q: Should the public be concerned?

A: This is an important public health issue that is only going to get worse unless we do something. The public should be aware of the situation and use this information to make choices that can help turn the tide.

Q: What can the public do to prevent the spread of these super germs?

A: If you are sick, ask your healthcare provider about steps you can take to get better without using antibiotics. If you are prescribed an antibiotic, be sure to take it exactly as prescribed and safely discard any leftover medication. People can prevent infections from occurring by practicing good personal hygiene and getting all recommended vaccines, including the flu shot.

Q: What's one thing about the film that DOH employees should keep in mind?

A: While the film shows a somber and scary scenario, there are people at the state, national and global levels working to slow the spread of these dangerous germs. But we need your help. Use antibiotics responsibly and encourage your friends, family and healthcare providers to do the same. Visit DOH's [antimicrobial resistance webpage](#) for more information.

Health News & Tidbits

DEPUTY DIRECTOR WINS NATIONAL AWARD

Deputy DOH Director **Keith Yamamoto** has received the prestigious Noble J.

Swearingen Award for excellence in public health leadership and protecting and promoting the public's health. The award was presented by the National



Keith Yamamoto

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO). Keith was recognized for his service as a member of ASTHO's Senior Deputies Committee in which he provided critical

guidance and expertise on multiple state and territorial public health issues.

"It was an honor and at the same time very humbling to be recognized, especially knowing that I work alongside colleagues who are equally committed to improving the health and well-being of the people of Hawaii," Keith said.

Keith has served as DOH deputy director since 2011.

CHISTY RECEIVES PUBLIC HEALTH AWARD

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH) presented **Zeshan Chisty**, MPH with the 2017 Public Health Award at the annual HAH Awards & Scholarship Gala held Oct. 21 at the Koolau



Zeshan Chisty

Ballrooms and Conference Center.

Zeshan, who was born and raised in Montreal and attended school in Texas, is with the Disease Investigation Branch

where he works as the healthcare associated infections collaborative coordinator. Zeshan was selected for the award for his efforts to promote and protect the health of the community and to raise awareness in the field of public health.

"It's truly an honor to be nominated by my peers and to have received the award," Zeshan said. "It motivates me to work even harder to improve patient safety in Hawaii."

Zeshan was nominated for the award by **Thaddeus Pham**, viral hepatitis prevention coordinator from the Harm Reduction Services Branch, who is most impressed with Zeshan's positive attitude and energy.

"Zeshan embodies what I believe is the future of public health—expertise coupled with collaboration with community partners. He not only demonstrates competence in his field, but also builds relationships that enhance the network of health in Hawaii," Thaddeus said.

TAI CHI EXPERT HOLDS MASTER CLASS

Honolulu enjoyed a rare treat as international Tai Chi expert Dr. Paul Lam held a master class on Nov. 4-5 at 15 Craigsides Place in Nuuanu. It marked the first ever visit to Honolulu for Dr. Lam, whose Tai Chi For Arthritis and Fall Prevention Program (TCAFP) is taught at 33 locations statewide.

"The workshop was an opportunity to learn from a renowned Tai Chi master," said **Stan Michaels**, DOH senior fall prevention specialist. "TCAFP is Eastern movement art that provides numerous health benefits such as increased strength and improved balance and flexibility, which makes falls much less likely. Dr. Lam's tai chi differs from conventional martial arts as there is no speed or aggressive movements in his modality."

The two-day class was part of DOH's annual Senior Fall Prevention Campaign. Tai Chi is recommended by the U.S. Centers For Disease Control and Prevention and DOH for older people to reduce their risk of falling.

Go to <http://health.hawaii.gov/injuryprevention/home/preventing-falls/information/> or call (808) 733-9202 for more information about fall prevention for seniors.



Stan Michaels

OHTA WINS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Gerald Ohta from the DOH Office of Planning, Policy and Program Development (OPPPD) received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Public Health Association (APHA) Council of Affiliates. Gerald was recognized for his extraordinary dedication to public health and to the Council of Affiliates, which coordinates communication and activities within APHA.



Gerald Ohta

Program Specialist **Jean Luka** from OPPPD described Gerald as a "walking encyclopedia."

"He's one in a million," Jean said. "I've always been impressed with Gerald's deep knowledge of the history of public health in Hawaii and his tremendous concern for people who need health care resources."

Gerald's career in state government spanned 47 years before he retired in July 2017. He continues to work with OPPPD on a special project about the history of public health in the state.